



**The Higher Ground Foundation**  
- stand up to climate change

## **Request for Project Concept Notes**

April 2018

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Please direct all inquiries to:

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## 1. VRC™ and The Higher Ground Foundation

To encourage investment in climate adaptation projects, The Higher Ground Foundation created the Vulnerability Reduction Credit, or VRC™, an economic measure of the effects of such projects in reducing vulnerability. The VRC is an exchangeable certificate that a project has met and is meeting its adaptation targets. VRCs are a means to quantifiably assess a project, based on sustained attention to maintaining climate resilience. As such they may be used for monitoring and evaluating projects, prioritizing investments, and could be purchased by parties interested in securing verifiable reductions in climate vulnerability from climate adaptation.

An important part of the scheme's approach is giving organizations a practical way to demonstrate their interest and actions in directly combating the impacts of climate change in vulnerable communities, while showing they are leaders in innovative climate adaptation evaluation, attribution, and finance. In other words, it provides a chance to take action that directly reduces the vulnerability of those who are impacted by climate change.

The Higher Ground Foundation prepared, and conducted an experts review of its [VRC Standard Framework](#), and released a public draft of the Framework in Autumn of 2017. The Framework provides the requirements for developing projects and methodologies, including clear baseline regimes, as well as the requirements for validation and monitoring, of projects and verification of the project outputs. And while VRCs are a quantified, fungible instrument, very clear, qualitative and quantitative thresholds must be met to ensure that harm, and certainly catastrophic harm, is avoided.

With the VRC Standard Framework launched, projects can be registered to qualify for VRCs in our [“Pilot Implementation and Partnerships Phase” \(PIPP\)](#). Higher Ground is currently very active in seeking out partners for the PIPP across an array of sectors and regions. During this phase, the HGF will be working with funders and creators of adaptation projects, climate service providers, and communities vulnerable to climate change to develop pilot projects that will gain “early credit” for their adaptation results.

## 2. Objective in Calling for Project Concept Notes

Higher Ground's PIPP (Pilot Implementation and Partnerships Phase) is an opportunity to test the VRC concept, VRC Standard Framework, and implementation of projects using VRCs. The best proof of concept is a working and easily replicable set of pilot projects that go through the VRC assessment for registration and issuance.

*Higher Ground* is interested in identifying projects with committed champions that will serve as pioneering efforts in testing the VRC market scheme. These projects will benefit from support by *Higher Ground* in defining project level baselines, monitoring systems, and securing project sponsors interested in the securing VRCs.

Such a pilot project should be:

- **Relevant:** demonstrating clear linkages between anticipated climate changes and the project's ability to measurably reduce the vulnerabilities to the impacts of these changes
- **Executable:** the proponents are committed to the sustained management of the project and can demonstrate that, with support including VRCs generated, the project will not face significant barriers to implementation
- **Transparent:** with a full disclosure of mechanics
- **Simple and Replicable:** simple enough in design that may be transferable to other projects, and easy enough to employ the VRC metric and process
- **Sustained:** projects where the proponents and community want and expect the project to be undertaken, maintained and improved over at least several years
- **Fully integrated:** covering each aspect of the entire project cycle

As noted above, in a voluntary setting the demand has to be created, not forced upon market participants. Therefore, a pilot project is a very effective, even necessary communication tool to create and stimulate demand.

The requested Project Concept Notes are an opportunity for project proponents to begin the process of communicating their project to *Higher Ground*. Those projects that look like they have potential to be good candidates for vulnerability reduction credits will be contacted to develop a dialogue and further assess their applicability as *Higher Ground* pioneers.

### 3. Guidelines in Preparing Project Concept Notes

The below guidelines aim to give The Higher Ground Foundation a first order understanding of projects and their potential to be good candidates for pioneer project status. In addition to covering all of these sections, to the best of abilities, please include in the cover letter any additional information that you believe will be relevant in considering your project. For further details on what Higher Ground is seeking, visit the [VRC Standard Framework](#), and in particular the VRC Project Document Template (Section 15).

Note: Feel free to submit without having all responses; while complete answers are ideal, the concept note is intended to identify potential and identify gaps to address during PIPP.

- A. Project Information (not more than 600 words)
  - a. Title of Project
  - b. Project Goals and Objectives
  - c. Location (district/city, country)
  - d. Sector(s) Covered
  - e. Timeframe (how long is the project to be sustained?)
  - f. Vulnerability Reduced: what vulnerabilities/impacts and how are they reduced?
  - g. Project Participants
    - i. Owner(s) of vulnerable asset(s)
    - ii. Developer
    - iii. Investor
    - iv. Other
- B. Context (not more than 400 words)
  - a. Baseline vulnerability with climate change (climate impacts, quantified): what is vulnerable, and if possible, to what extent (e.g., flooding frequency and severity)?
  - b. Proposed project and anticipated vulnerability reduction (climate impacts quantified): to what extent is the project expected to reduce vulnerabilities? If possible, quantify (e.g. crop productivity) how much the project will improve or minimize expected losses.
- C. Data Availability (not more than 150 words)
  - a. Relevant historical and projected climate changes, downscaled, and scenario?
  - b. Data on community income
  - c. Data on climate impacts and costs, data on correlating project impacts and costs
- D. Project Activities and Calendar
  - a. Anticipated Start of Project Implementation
  - b. Completion of Capital Deployment
  - c. Anticipated request for first issuance of Vulnerability Reduction Credits
- E. Climate Vulnerability Reduction Expected Results (not more than 300 words)
  - a. Economic (vulnerability reduction in monetary terms)
  - b. Social (e.g., lives protected, community preserved, etc.)
  - c. Environmental (biodiversity protection, etc.)
- F. Investment costs (Capital Costs, operating and maintenance costs, in-kind contributions) & Financing plan, if any (not more than 200 words)
- G. Budget Estimate (broken down by key components)
- H. Organizational Background of project proponents, including expertise and experience (not more than 300 words)
- I. Complete Contact Information